

Defense Secrets 'Leaks' Stir Congress Debate

United Press International
Controversy over alleged Democratic "leaks" of the Nation's defense secrets cracked yesterday in the great debate over whether United States defenses are adequate.

Implied targets of the Republican complaints about "leaks" were Sens. Lyndon B. Johnson (Tex.) and Stuart Symington (Mo.), Democratic presidential aspirants and members of the Senate Space and Preparedness Committees now investigating the Administration's military policies.

Democrats replied that the Republican concern should be directed to the state of the Nation's defenses. They also deplored any "leaks."

At the same time, Speaker Sam Rayburn charged that the Administration has not made "anywhere near the progress" it should have in the missile race with Russia despite the billion voted by Congress for defense. He said he did not know what was wrong.

Holds News Session

"I don't know whether our engineers and scientists have not been turned loose or what," he said, but "it doesn't do any good to be second in anything," especially war.

Rayburn volunteered his remarks at the news conference he holds daily just before the House meets. He also permitted them to be quoted directly, although his statements usually are for background purposes and are considered "off the record."

The "leaks" furor was touched off Monday when Symington, Air Force Secretary under President Truman, threatened to make public secret intelligence estimates of Russian missile power if the Administration insisted that the Soviet rocket threat had diminished.

Sen. Prescott Bush (R-Conn.) then criticized what he called "the disclosure of much too much information to the enemy about our plans and our estimates of their plans."

The Republican National Committee charged Tuesday night that any release of intelligence data by Symington would be "an act of total reckless irresponsibility."

Called "Lost Years"

"If Symington is going to treat top secret intelligence with such disdain, it becomes the responsibility of the Democratic leadership to see that no such information reaches his hands," the GOP committee said in its publication, "Battle Line."

The publication called Symington's stint as Air Force Secretary "the lost years" in missile development.

Symington retorted yesterday that "distorting the history of the 1940s will not close the missile gap of the 1960s or strengthen our position at the coming summit conferences."

In the course of Tuesday's battle, Sen. Everett M. Dirksen (R-Ill.) quoted in a Senate speech a column by Joseph Alsop saying "the hard-disturbing facts and figures in the testimony of the director of the Central Intelligence Agency, Allen W. Dulles, before the Space Committee can now be revealed on undoubted authority."

Dirksen, as reported by the Associated Press, asked: "Who is this undoubted authority? Who has made available, in whole or in part, or in paraphrase or in capsule form, any of the testimony given by the director of the CIA?"

"That becomes a very serious question when one is dealing with the whole problem of national defense and national security," he added.

"I think it is one thing that merits further attention by the Senate."

In Wasau, Wis., Alsop had this to say about the Senate Republican leaders' remarks:

"Sen. Dirksen's partisan twaddle deserves only one comment: The subject needing investigation by the Senate is the American Government's recent persistent habit of grossly misrepresenting the national situation and seeking to conceal the vital facts concerning our situation."